

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF WELLS

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER, 1951



WELLS:
CLARE, SON & CO. LTD.
9, HIGH STREET

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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1951.

Wells, Somerset.
June 18th, 1952.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1951.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area, 57,175 Acres.

Population as supplied by the Registrar General, 10,220.

Number of inhabited houses on the Rate Books, 2,884.

Rateable Value : £43,703.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate: £174 1s. 7d. (at March, 1951).

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

GEOLOGY.—Dolomitic Conglomerate at Chewton Mendip and Westbury-sub-Mendip; Mountain Limestone at Priddy; Red Marl at Dinder, North Wootton and Rodney Stoke; Red Marl and River Gravel at Wookey; Lower Lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough and Walton; Alluvium and Peat at Glastonbury Moor, Meare and Godney.

OCCUPATION.—Chiefly Agricultural; Cheese and Cider Making; Dairy Farming; Paper Factories at Wookey and Wookey Hole; Stone Quarrying in various parts of the District. Some of the people at Butleigh and Walton work at Shoe, Leather and Skin Factories at Street and Glastonbury. At Wookey Hole there is a factory manufacturing Electric Components, Fractional Motors and Television Equipment.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR

Births :

			Total	M.	F.	
Legitimate	...	...	140	71	69	
Illegitimate	...	...	14	6	8	
			154	77	77	Birth Rate 15.07

Still Births : Total 5, Legitimate 5, Illegitimate Nil.

Deaths : Total 126, Male 67, Female 59, Death Rate 12.33.

Number of Women dying in or in consequence of Childbirth : Nil.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age : Total 9, Legitimate 9, Illegitimate Nil.

Death Rate of Infants : All Infants per 1,000 live births, 58.44.
 Premature birth and debility accounted for : 2 ; Bronchitis 3.
 Deaths from Cancer (all ages), 22.
 Deaths from Measles (all ages), Nil.
 Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages), Nil.
 Deaths from Pneumonia (all ages), 4.
 Deaths from Cerebro-Spinal Fever (all ages), Nil.
 Deaths from Diphtheria (all ages), Nil.
 Deaths from Influenza (all ages), 6.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR

Disease				Total Cases	Admitted to	Deaths
				Notified	Hospital	
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	4	Nil	Nil
Diphtheria	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
Measles	...	...	...	244	Nil	Nil
Puereral pyrexia	...	...	...	1	—	Nil
Cerebro-spinal-meningitis	...	...	...	Nil	—	Nil
Pneumonia	...	...	...	5	Nil	4
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	13	Nil	Nil
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	Nil	—	Nil
Dysentery	...	...	...	Nil	—	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	Nil	—	Nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	2	2	Nil

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Mortality during the year :

Age Periods.	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
5—10		1						
15—20		2						
20—25	1							
25—30	1	2					1	
30—35		1						
40—45	1							
45—50	1	2			1			
50—55	2							
63—65	3				2			

Public Officers of the District :

Medical Officer of Health (part-time): Dr. T. R. G. Melrose, F.R.C.S. (Ed.).

Chief Sanitary Inspector (whole time) : Stanley Merton Payne, Cert., S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Diploma of the Institute of Hygiene ; R.S.I. Certificate as Inspector of Meat and other Foods ; R.S.I. Certificate in Sanitary Science as applied to Buildings and Public Works.

Additional Sanitary Inspector (whole time) : S. Harkness, Cert., S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Certificate as Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.

Water Engineer and Surveyor (whole time): Ivor Roberts Morgan, B.Sc. (Hons.), A.M.I.Mun.E., A.M.I.C.E.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS. There were no special causes of sickness.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING. District Nurses under Local Associations and Health Visitors, appointed by the County Council; the latter keep us informed as to the existence and removal of Tuberculosis Cases and other matters effecting the health of the district.

CLINICS. There is an Infant Welfare Centre in Wells, which is used by people residing in the Rural Area. School and Tuberculosis Clinics are provided by the County Council.

MIDWIVES. The lists are kept by the County Medical Officer of Health to whom they report all births, and any abnormal circumstances which might arise therefrom.

HOSPITALS. Tuberculosis: These are provided by the County Council. Smallpox: This is also provided by the County Council. Maternity and Children: Wells Cottage Hospital.

SCARLET FEVER, DIPHTHERIA, Etc. Any infectious cases are now moved to the Ham Green Hospital, at Bristol.

No institution for un-married mothers, illegitimate children and homeless children exists in the District.

Removals of infectious cases to Hospital are now arranged from the Ham Green Hospital, in Bristol, on notification from the attending Doctor or the Public Health Department.

Attendance is made weekly by the County Tuberculosis Officer at Glastonbury and a considerable number of patients from the Rural Area attend here. The homes of notified cases are visited by the Sanitary Inspector and myself as well as by the County Health Visitors.

In the cases of Diphtheria and Cerebro-Spinal-Meningitis use is made of the County Bacteriological Laboratory, and Anti-Toxin is supplied by the District Council, when applied for by the Medical men practising in the District.

DISINFECTION. After infectious disease this is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector with the use of spraying apparatus on the lines recommended by the County Medical Officer of Health. All disinfectants are supplied free by the Council.

LABORATORY WORK. The County Council have a laboratory at Taunton where samples are examined both bacteriologically and chemically and also for tubercule bacilli. In addition the Public Health Laboratory Service have a laboratory at Taunton dealing with water samples, ice cream, etc.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS. There have been no complaints and inspections during the year have revealed no bed bugs.

VENEREAL DISEASE. From the available evidence it would appear that the area is remarkably free from this disease.

SEWERAGE

The Wookey village scheme is in the course of construction and should be completed early in 1952.

Other village schemes (Walton, Cheddar Valley, etc.) are in course of preparation, and it is to be hoped that these too can be constructed before further housing development takes place.

WATER SUPPLY

The work of main laying for the Comprehensive Water Scheme has been commenced in the Northern parts of the district.

Arrangements for the supplementation of the water resources are proceeding satisfactorily. Supplementary water to the Priddy supply is necessary in order to meet the future needs of the Wells Rural Area also the additional needs of Wells City and Glastonbury Borough.

Baltonsborough. Each inhabited house has a supply laid on. The water is supplied in bulk from the Shepton Mallet R.D.C. A reservoir of 25,000 gals. capacity is situate on Windmill Hill with a top water level of O.D. + 190.

The delivery of water during the summer months is still very restricted and to meet the deficiencies the Council have provided a pump and chlorinating plant to extract water from the river. This water is pumped up to the reservoir and tests have proved that the quality is satisfactory. Water is also brought to this village by a link main from West Pennard—this meets most of the shortages in the lower parts of the village, but during peak draw off periods pressure is bad—this is due to the low head (O.D. + 159 and the length of small bore link main).

BUTLEIGH.

About 42 of the 168 houses have a water supply laid on from the Estate Supply. About 30 rely on standpipes and the remainder on private wells. The Estate Supply is derived from surface springs and storage of 500,000 gallons or more is provided in a series of reservoirs. The quality of the water is usually good, but there have in the past been various occasions on which pollution has occurred. Sampling of individual springs was carried out some few years ago and the water from the bad springs was cut off. The supply as it exists is far from sufficient for the needs, and during dry periods great conservation has to be practised. The Hospital has a private supply laid on from a borehole, this supply has been constantly under supervision owing to the variable quality of the water.

CHEWTON MENDIP.

Approximately 91 out of 174 properties are supplied from the the Estate Supply or from Shepton Mallet. Of the remainder 44 have supplies available within 100 yards. The other properties are generally outlying and have to rely on wells or rainwater tanks. The Estate Supply is derived from surface springs and a borehole. The water pressure at certain points, such as Nedge Hill and West End is inadequate and during periods of economy these places are the first to suffer. Reservoir capacity is only on a very small scale and the supply generally appears to require further development.

OUT ST. CUTHBERT.

East and West Horrington.

A spring supply piped to a 10,000 gallon reservoir at 656 O.D. provides water for these two villages. The water is of good quality and all needs have been met up to the present. Some 59 out of 116 houses have a piped supply and the remainder have standpipes available within reasonable distance.

Coxley

Approximately 102 houses out of 185 are now supplied with water on tap. Some of this is from the Council's main and some from private mains (mainly the Ecclesiastical Commissioners). Most of the remaining houses are being connected up as quickly as possible by the Council's plumbers.

Burcott.

71 houses either without water or relying on their own wells.

Easton.

73 houses. Some have private piped supplies. There are two public wells which provide good water for the bulk of the population. Most of the private wells are polluted and out of use.

Wookey Hole, Elm Close and Haybridge.

These groups of houses are supplied by Wells City who are the Statutory Water Undertakers. Most houses have piped supplies of good quality water in adequate supply.

Dulcote.

Some 44 houses of which 31 have a piped supply derived from a small private water system installed many years ago. There are no complaints of shortage and the cottages without piped supplies have water available within easy reach.

Chilcote, Worminster, Milton and Walcombe.

These small groups of houses have piped supplies from various sources. Their needs appear to have been met, and they do not form part of the Regional Scheme.

DINDER.

35 out of 57 houses have piped supplies from the Estate Supply. This water is derived from springs which rise near Masbury Ring. The remainder of the houses are not within reach of the mains and have to rely on wells, etc., for their water. The Estate Water is of good quality and appears to be sufficient for present requirements.

GODNEY.

47 out of 73 houses have piped supplies from the Street U.D.C. main which runs through the village. The supply is of good quality and there is no shortage at any time. The remainder of the houses have to rely on private supply as they are not in compact groups or within easy reach of the trunk main.

MEARE.

There are 257 houses in this Parish. During the year water mains have been laid to the greater part of the Parish and a low-pressure supply afforded. High pressure water will be available on completion of the water tower.

NORTH WOOTTON.

64 out of 78 houses have piped water of good quality and unlimited quantity. The remainder of the houses are not within easy reach of the mains but in at least three of these cases they are likely to lay on water at an early date. The water is derived from two boreholes, each fitted with an electric pump. There is a reservoir of 30,000 gallons capacity at 155 O.D. One electric pump is controlled by float switch and provides water for the Parish—the other pump is manually controlled and delivers water into the chlorinating plant of the Glastonbury Corporation which is within 100 yards of our plant. The water so delivered is taken back by this Council at West Pennard for use in that Parish.

PRIDDY.

37 out of 96 houses now have a piped supply from an agricultural system installed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, also a number of farmhouses. The District Council are purchasing water in

bulk at some of the remote parts of the village, and are distributing to the nearby cottages. The water is of good quality.

A very large part of the population still have to haul water from the Council's supply at Priddy Green. This water also is of excellent quality and of such sufficiency that it forms the major source of the Council's Regional Water Supply Scheme.

RODNEY STOKE

There are 227 houses in this Parish. 41 are supplied by Street U.D.C. under their Water Act which empowers them to supply as many as can be fed by gravity from their trunk main. 55 other houses are supplied by this Council's new main, and others are being connected.

SHARPHAM.

8 houses out of 28 have piped supplies. The remainder are not within easy reach of the main and have to haul water from one of two standpipes which have been provided. The source of the water is the Street U.D.C. main. Wells R.D.C. purchase in bulk. Quality and quantity satisfactory.

WALTON.

There are 147 houses, and all except the outlying ones now have water on tap. Total connected is 112.

WESTBURY.

39 out of 173 houses have piped supplies—these are of a private nature and mainly from an agricultural scheme installed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners some years ago. The remainder of the houses rely on private wells or the three public wells.

WEST PENNARD.

172 out of 195 houses have piped supplies. The remainder have either a standpipe within easy reach or have private supplies. There is a 30,000 gallon reservoir at Sticklynch, and water is purchased in bulk from the Glastonbury Corporation. When shortages were encountered it became necessary to provide Glastonbury Corporation with water at North Wootton (see note above) and during the dry season it is now possible to pump into the main at North Wootton as much water as is required to be extracted at West Pennard. The arrangement is very satisfactory to both Councils.

WOOKEY.

A rather scattered Parish comprising Wookey, Yarley, Henton and Bleadney. The Ecclesiastical Parish of Wookey itself now has water mains available to most houses. The complete Civil Parish comprises 260 houses of which 87 now have piped water.

THE MENDIP HOSPITAL.

This large County Institution which houses well over 1,000 persons has its own water supply. The main source is two boreholes situate between Bristol Road and Watchet's Spring which provides the water for East and West Horrington. These boreholes are in the old red sandstone formation, and yield sufficient water for the very large demands of such an institution and the farms run in connection therewith. The Hospital is within the Statutory Supply Area of the City of Wells, and if this authority are asked to supplement the water supply of the Hospital it is apparent that Wells R.D.C. would have to supply more water to the City to enable them to do so.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT

The following is a summary of the inspections made during the year :—

Infectious dwellings: Occupiers served with notice as to isolation of patients and disinfection	20
Disinfectants supplied by the Council	32
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health	20
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, etc.	63
Samples of drinking water sent to the County Laboratory for analysis	67
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for the storage of petrol	48
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for the storage of carbide of calcium	Nil
Visits re water supplies	188
Bakehouses (6), Slaughterhouses (12), inspected ...	18
Public Schools inspected	12
Visits to dairies	30
Visits re food inspection	120
Other inspections under Housing Acts	320
Visits re rats	719
Visits re sewage disposal schemes	44
Visits re refuse collection	68
Inspections of Ice Cream premises	48

REFUSE COLLECTION.

Unburnable household refuse is collected monthly. The Council use their own vehicle (Bedford Eagle) for this work.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

1.—INSPECTIONS for purpose of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by local Authorities	41	38	Nil	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies (a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement) Order, 1938				
(b) Others	25	31	Nil	Nil
(iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises)				
TOTAL	66	69	Nil	Nil

DEFECTS (i.e. want of Cleanliness) were found in 6 cases, and inadequate sanitary accommodation in 2 cases. These were remedied on informal action.

OUTWORKERS. There are 74 outworkers in the district (all glove makers).

ICE CREAM

No premises are licensed for the manufacture of ice cream, but 18 shops are registered for the sale of this product.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Under the Livestock (Restriction on Slaughtering) Order 1940, all the slaughterhouses in the Rural area became automatically closed on January 12th, 1940. With the exception of farmers' pigs (for their own consumption) and a few casualties no slaughtering has taken place at any of the slaughterhouses. Regular inspection has therefore to a great extent been unnecessary. Only a small quantity of meat has been condemned during the year.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Inspection of food at shops and stores is carried out regularly and small quantities have been condemned as found necessary. Model bye laws with regard to the sale of food were adopted by the Council on August 28th, 1950.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDERS.

On October 1st, 1949, the control of milk producing premises (with the exception of water supplies and drainage) passed to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Local control generally speaking now only applies to the Retailing of Milk—other than Producer-Retailers.

The number of Purveyors of Milk (other than Producer-Retailers) is 13.

There are 3 Bottling licences for T.T. milk and 3 licences to retail T.T. or Accredited Milk. There are 4 supplementary licences issued to retailers whose dairy is outside the area.

HOUSING

There were 255 applicants for Council Houses remaining on the lists at December 31st.

8 condemned houses were still occupied under licence at the end of the year.

An estimate of 210 houses still necessary was made as follows : To replace unfit houses 421 ; to abate overcrowding 2 ; Other unfit conditions 35.

During the year 23 new houses have been completed by the Council and 8 by private enterprise. A further 27 were under construction, 23 by the Council and 4 by private enterprise.

We have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servants,

T. R. G. MELROSE,

Medical Officer of Health.

S. M. PAYNE,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.

